



ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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**Contact: Seth Blomeley
Communications Director
(501) 683-4788
seth.blomeley@arkansas.gov**

SCHOOL FACILITIES PROJECTS APPROVED

The Arkansas Public School Academic Facilities and Transportation Commission on Wednesday approved 219 projects at Arkansas public schools that include \$188.7 million in state funding to improve the education environment for the state's nearly 460,000 students.

Examples of approved projects include a new roof at Goza Middle School in Arkadelphia, five new kindergarten classrooms at Springhill Elementary in Bryant, a new high school in Cabot, and an improved heating and air system at Dover High School.

The three-member commission met at the Department of Education auditorium in Little Rock. The members are Education Commissioner Tom Kimbrell, Department of Finance and Administration Director Richard Weiss, and Arkansas Development and Finance Authority President Mac Dodson. The approval was unanimous.

Most of the projects will begin during fiscal 2012, which starts July 1, 2011. Some won't begin until fiscal 2013.

Kimbrell complimented the work by the staff of Dr. Charles Stein, the director of the Division of Public School Academic Facilities and Transportation.

"Dr. Stein and his staff has exhibited an attitude of openness and willingness to serve and help the public schools of Arkansas," Kimbrell said.

The facilities division evaluated each application from districts. There were 83 proposed projects rejected.

The commissioner also noted the economic impact the building projects have had in Arkansas and how they have contributed toward improving education for public school students throughout the state.

Significant state funding of public school facilities followed the program's creation during the 2005 legislative session. Through April 8, the state has contributed \$411.9 million toward school facilities. There have been 814 projects completed. Another 334 are in progress. Local property taxes also contribute toward the projects.

The program helps ensure that students attend schools with adequate and equitable facilities, as required by the state Supreme Court's *Lake View* decision in 2002.

The complete list of projects approved Wednesday are available at <http://arkansasfacilities.arkansas.gov/>